

ReConnect makes a huge difference to people's lives. It enables refugees with often unrecognised talent and competence to find a way forward in higher education and teaching. Everyone benefits: the individuals, society and the education system itself." Professor Tom Schuller, former Dean, Birkbeck, University of London"

UPDATE

Preparation for Higher Education Programme at UCL

Our partner University College London (UCL) Institute of Education (IoE) has continued to deliver ReConnect's Preparation Higher Education programme since 2018.

26 Refugees and asylum seekers from 11 countries, 14 females and 12 males, are currently attending the Summer 2023 Term.

Since the programme started in September 2018, a total of 251 refugees and asylum seekers, 138 females and 113 males, from 34 countries, have been supported on the programme.

Educational Counselling & Credit Transfer Information Services (ECCTIS)

Since the initiative started, in June 2021, we have supported 83 (42 females and 41 males) refugees and asylum seekers from 22 countries to secure authoritative Statements of Comparability of their overseas qualifications from ECCTIS (formerly NARIC), enabling them to make an informed decision on their preferred options in higher education.

Pathways into Teaching for Refugees Programme at IOE

We are currently actively seeking to raise the required funds to restore the programme.

Since 2005, In partnership with Birkbeck and the Institute of Education, ReConnect has enabled 59 (33 males, 26 females) unemployed and underemployed refugees, from 20 countries to gain teaching qualifications.

An Impact Survey Report of the 59 refugees supported by Reconnect on a PGCE programme, undertaken by Zhen Yang, a PhD student at University of Warwick will be available shortly.

Theodros Abraham
Director of ReConnect
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<https://reconnectonline.org.uk/>


Gone with the Wind
In a foreign land
a lonely dandelion sways.
Far from home
far from good old days...

Once blooming in a darling meadow
now lonesome amidst strangers.
Staring at her own shadow
striving to find what really matters...

Homesickness weighs heavy.
Very heavy.
Yet she continues to bloom
she continues to thrive
with beauty and determination.

Go, dandelion, go!
Dance with the breeze,
beacon of hope!
Let your spirit roar!
Let your dreams happen!
That's what you are meant for!

Bahar



SUPPORTING REFUGEES INTO HIGHER EDUCATION

Join us at our free Refugee Week Event

Monday 19 June 5 to 8 pm
In the Jeffrey Hall, UCL Institute Education
20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL

RECOGNISE

the achievements of students who completed the UCL IOE ReConnect - Preparation for Higher Education Programme for refugees

RAISE AWARENESS

about the barriers faced by refugees in accessing Higher Education & the work of ReConnect

- Official Opening by **Professor Li Wei**, Director of the institute of Education, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society
- **Keynote speaker:** Professor Brad K Blitz
<https://iris.ucl.ac.uk/iris/browse/profile?upi=BBLIT16>
- Presentation by Aine McAllister, Preparation for Higher Education Programme Leader
- Presentation by Theodros Abraham, Director/ Founder of Reconnect
- Presentation by Zhen Yang, a PhD student at University of Warwick
- **Students & alumni** from the programme, teachers with refugee background
- Presentation of **poetry** from *Collaborative Autoethnographic Poetic Inquiry*, carried out with ReConnect participants

Please confirm attendance: email: theodros@reconnectonline.org.uk

*Supported by



Enhance Project

A SUCCESS STORY

ReConnect creates opportunities for refugees to realise their potential

RELOCATION OPPORTUNITY CHALLENGE/

Ismail is a seasoned policy maker and mining engineer from Afghanistan who worked as a Senior Mining and Energy specialist in the Administrative Office of the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Afghanistan is rich with untapped mining deposits, e.g., coal, gold, and Ismail did detailed work with exploration companies, and contributed to the national mineral portfolio. This work ended after the collapse of the democratic government in August 2021; the Taliban government took control.

It was devastating for Ismail to leave his homeland but having worked with representatives of the UK government (part of the UK aid programme), he and his family were able to settle in UK under ARAP (Afghan Relocation Assistance Policy). This immediately gave him the right to work, and he found a part time job. Whilst staying in a hotel he was helped by Home Office officials and a job coach/education adviser, who told him about the ReConnect 'Preparation for Higher Education' course and put him in touch with Theodros. This course oriented him into the higher education system in the UK, and developed his study skills, academic writing etc. He is very grateful to ReConnect and the tutors at the Institute of Education, who helped him find his next step. Also very grateful to his Buddy/ Mentor, Professor Izzat Darwish/ UCL.

Ismail and his family are living in London, and he is following a Master's degree in Energy, Technology and Public Policy, at University College London. He described this course as bringing together the skills of developing public policy, with scientific and technical knowledge.

Ismail is supported by a Warm Welcome scholarship, funded by the UK government Department of Education, to support people in UK, with links to Afghanistan, to access higher education.

He is enjoying the course but is aware that the future is uncertain, and there is little chance of an inclusive government in Afghanistan, which he would be able to work for.

Interview conducted by Sarah Buxton
Chair of Trustees

SUPPORTING REFUGEES INTO HIGHER EDUCATION/ TEACHING

Established in 2003 ReConnect works with unemployed and underemployed refugees to reconnect them to their professions, especially teaching. We provide guidance and support; liaise with education providers to deliver relevant training including work experience; support transfer of skills to developing countries; and draw attention to forced displacement and education needs. <https://reconnectonline.org.uk/>

APPEAL BY SARAH BUXTON

Chair of Trustees

sarahbuxton@reconnectonline.org.uk

ReConnect continues to develop, and our link with the Institute of Education goes from strength to strength. The tutors and our Director work closely together, enabling course participants to maximise the opportunity of the 10 week course: orientation to higher education in the UK, strengthening study and language skills, collaborative working with colleagues, and planning their next step.

Raising funds for our programmes is a challenge. We have received grants from individuals and funding bodies, but to rebuild the Pathways to Teaching for Refugees programme we need new donors. We will be grateful for any contributions, however small, and any suggestions about possible donors who might be interested in supporting our work.

Alan Phillips

Staff and Trustees at ReConnect were sad to learn of the recent death of Alan Phillips. There is a direct connection between Alan and the work of ReConnect. As General Secretary of World University Service (WUS UK) between 1973 and 1981, Alan's commitment to human rights, and to supporting students and academics who were persecuted for their beliefs, and his leadership and fundraising ability, created opportunities for those in exile. Following the overthrow of the democratically elected government in Chile by the Pinochet regime in 1973, he persuaded the UK government to create scholarships for Chilean academics and students who were being persecuted in Chile. Scholarship programmes for refugees from Uganda, Ethiopia and Eritrea followed, and educational support to refugees in Southern Africa, Sudan and Nicaragua. Later Alan led work at the British Refugee Council, Minority Rights Group International, and for the Council of Europe, concerning the protection of minorities. I feel privileged to have worked in the Africa section at WUS UK, where I met our director and two trustees, who were all beneficiaries.



In later years he set up a WUS UK website <https://wus.org.uk/>; jointly organised the preparation of a book '100 Years: World University Service International 1920-2020' (see website); and linked ReConnect and Warwick University. Funding was secured for a PhD programme comparing support to refugee students through WUS with the work of ReConnect. Zhen Yang is the researcher, who will speak at our Refugee Week event on 19th June.

Guardian obituary:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/may/25/alan-phillips-obituary>

Minority Forum Info describes him as a 'towering figure in international minority protection.'

MAKE A DIFFERENCE/ DONATE

- It costs £1,200 for a refugee or asylum seeker to undertake our Preparation for Higher Education Programme. This includes guidance, course fees and cost of travel.
- It costs £11,000 for a refugee to undertake a teacher training course (PGCE Post Compulsory Education Programme), at UCL Institute of Education. This includes guidance, tuition fees, Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS), Occupational Health Check fees and cost of travel

HOW TO SUPPORT US

Donate via Just Giving

<https://reconnectonline.org.uk/donate>

Write to us

Send a cheque or CAF voucher (payable to ReConnect)
Charity No. 1105016
to: *ReConnect
Resource for London
356 Holloway Road
London N7 6PA*

Donate using Gift Aid

Gift Aid is a straightforward way to increase the value of your gift to ReConnect – at no extra cost to you. If you pay tax in the UK, ReConnect can claim an extra 25p for every £1 you donate. For example, if you donate £50, it is worth £62.50 to us.

To donate using Gift Aid please complete form here:

<https://reconnectonline.org.uk/gift-aid>

or email

theodros@reconnectonline.org.uk

Tel. 0207 697 4065



OUR THANKS

To all those who have supported us with grants and donations during the year. The Equator Fund, Cockiolly Trust, News Corp Giving Fund, Awards for All/ National Lottery, J H Levy Charitable Trust, Inchrye Trust, MSN Fund, and our many individual donors. With this financial support the Charity has been able to implement its programme.

The Charity is also grateful for the dedicated teaching and pastoral support provided by staff at UCL Institute of Education, including for the 'buddying' (mentoring) initiative.

Our thanks also to our Trustees, volunteers and members of our Advisory Group for their contribution to support our work.

Our thanks also to Mike Butler, Resource for London, for his committed support to our fundraising initiatives.

LINKS TO OUR WORK

A Guardian article on refugee teachers

<https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2017/jul/14/the-refugees-rebuilding-their-lives-as-teachers-in-british-schools>

UCL video on preparation for Higher Education Programme

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDi7-kdIuic>

UCL publicity video

<https://youtu.be/6DNZWezOXUU>